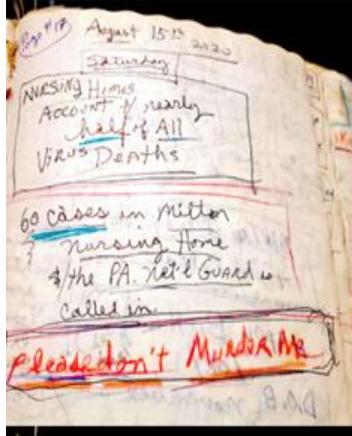




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PRESS RELEASE



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“Don’t Murder Me!”

reads an excerpt from the journal of David Italiano, a disabled individual who was ‘Disappeared’ in Pennsylvania’s broken guardianship system. What happened to [Britney Spears](#) is silently threatening many Pennsylvania residents with disabilities who are forced to live in risky congregate care facilities during a pandemic.

[MindFreedom International](#) (MFI) in conjunction with [Roads to Freedom Center for Independent Living](#) (RTFCIL), has issued a [Shield Alert](#) for David Italiano, a person with a disability who was placed under guardianship by the court because of a physically abusive wife who later died. He was in the process of being transitioned out of the nursing home and into community with help from RTFCIL, which has a federal mandate to provide assistance to disabled people to help them return to the community.

When David’s wife died, Pennsylvania law requires that the estate is probated, and all debts are correctly paid. At this time, David’s competency and ability to transition to his own home was suddenly called into question. The Area Agency on Aging took guardianship despite their multiple conflicts of interests and now David’s assets are in jeopardy of being taken. Seizing disabled people’s assets is a practice done by several AAAs in Pennsylvania. The social worker at the nursing home, forcibly confiscated Mr. Italiano’s cell phone while he was [talking with his supportive service provider](#) and stopped all contact with RTFCIL. On November 10, 2020, in David’s most recent court hearing to adjudicate his competency, [Judge Zanic](#) ignored the psychologist’s assessment which reported that he was competent and instead ruled him to be incompetent.

David Italiano is no longer at the Embassy at Loyalsock Long-term care facility. The [Shield Alert](#) has been issued to flood key officials in Pennsylvania with calls and letters demanding that David Italiano be located, protected and transitioned back to the community.

“Pennsylvania’s aging and long-term care system is stealing the liberty, voice and freedom of dozens of older people with disabilities and sadly locking them away in restrictive and dangerous nursing facilities across the state under the cover of abusive and inappropriately used guardianships. The practice violates the ADA, Older Americans Act and the Rehab Act of 1973’s mandates to provide services & supports in the least restrictive setting possible consistent with the SCOTUS’ (Supreme Court of the United States) landmark Olmstead decision.”

-Thomas H. Earle, Disability Rights Attorney & CEO of Liberty Resources, Inc.

[Liberty Resources Inc.](#), and other members of the [Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living](#) are actively accepting and filing numerous OCR complaints of abusive guardianship practices incarcerating Aging Pennsylvanians like David.